

Witch trials in the region of Šumperk

The purpose of my thesis is to outline the period of second half of the 17th century when the witch trials in the region of Šumperk occurred and to draw attention to new results in research for this matter. This work also focuses on the legal aspects of these witch trials.

The thesis is composed of eight chapters. Chapter One (subdivided into three parts) is introductory and explains who was considered as a witch and what these people might cause, what black and white magic is, and the differences between men and women witches.

Chapter Two is the introduction to witch trials. Part One examines the origin of the trials and their present shape and Part Two explains the problem of witch-hunting.

Chapter Three briefly compares in three parts the effects of religion, natural and human factors on the inception of witch trials.

Chapter Four presents the most important writings supporting the battle against witches, such as the bulla “*Summis desiderantes affectibus*” of Pope Innocent VIII., the infamous “*Malleus Maleficarum*” of Heinrich Kramer or Delrio’s “*Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex*”.

The law aspects of punishment for witchcraft in German and Czech territories is drawn in Chapter Five. In a few parts there are mentioned important enactments concerning witchcraft implicated in criminal codes like *Constitutio Criminalis Ferdinanda*, *Constitutio Criminalis Josephina* and *Constitutio Criminalis Theresiana*.

Chapter Six concentrates on the problem of the amount of witch-hunts victims. This topic represents one of the most controversial problems of witch-hunts. The amount was overestimated and abused for many other purposes.

Chapter Seven briefly introduces the witch trials that occurred in current Czech territory and the amount of those trials' victims.

The most important and extensive is Chapter Eight, which covers the witch trials in Velke Losiny and Šumperk during 1678-1696. The chapter consists of nine parts. Part One is introductory, while Part Two focuses on backgrounds of trials beginnings. The next three parts investigate the activity of inquisitorial tribunals in Velke Losiny and Šumperk led by infamous lawyer Heinrich Franz Boblig von Edelstadt. Part Six illustrates the shameful decision-making of the Prague appellate court. The Seventh Part reports the brave resistance of a few priests and the suppression it faced. The Eighth Part is dedicated to the best known victim of witch trials in the region of Šumperk – to Krystof Alois Lautner, a dean of the

Catholic Church. Part Nine explains the reasons that led to the end of the witch trials in the aforementioned regions.